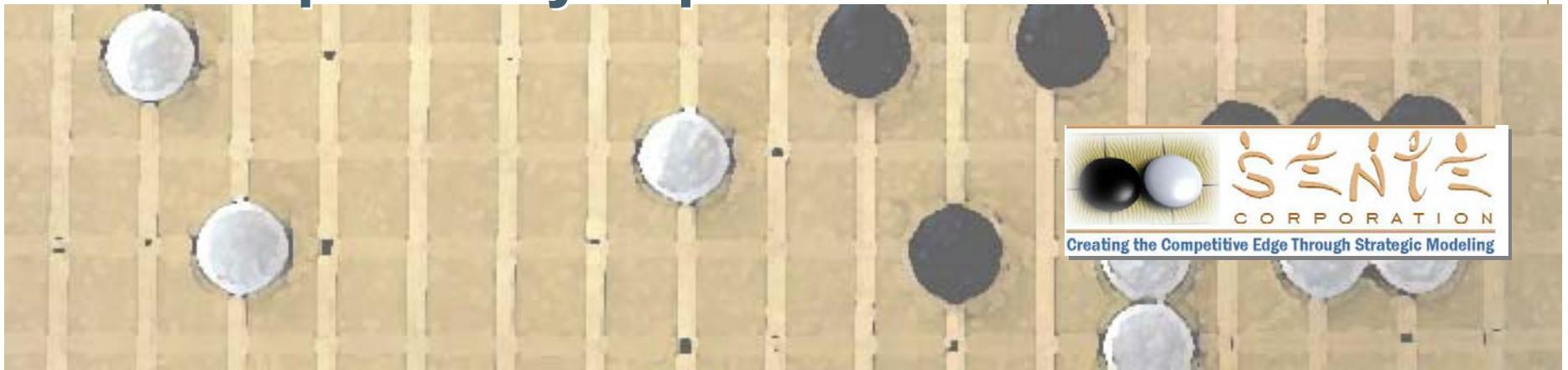


A Sample StoryMap



EXAMPLE

story mapping

An example of a StoryMap using a Sente Corporation model

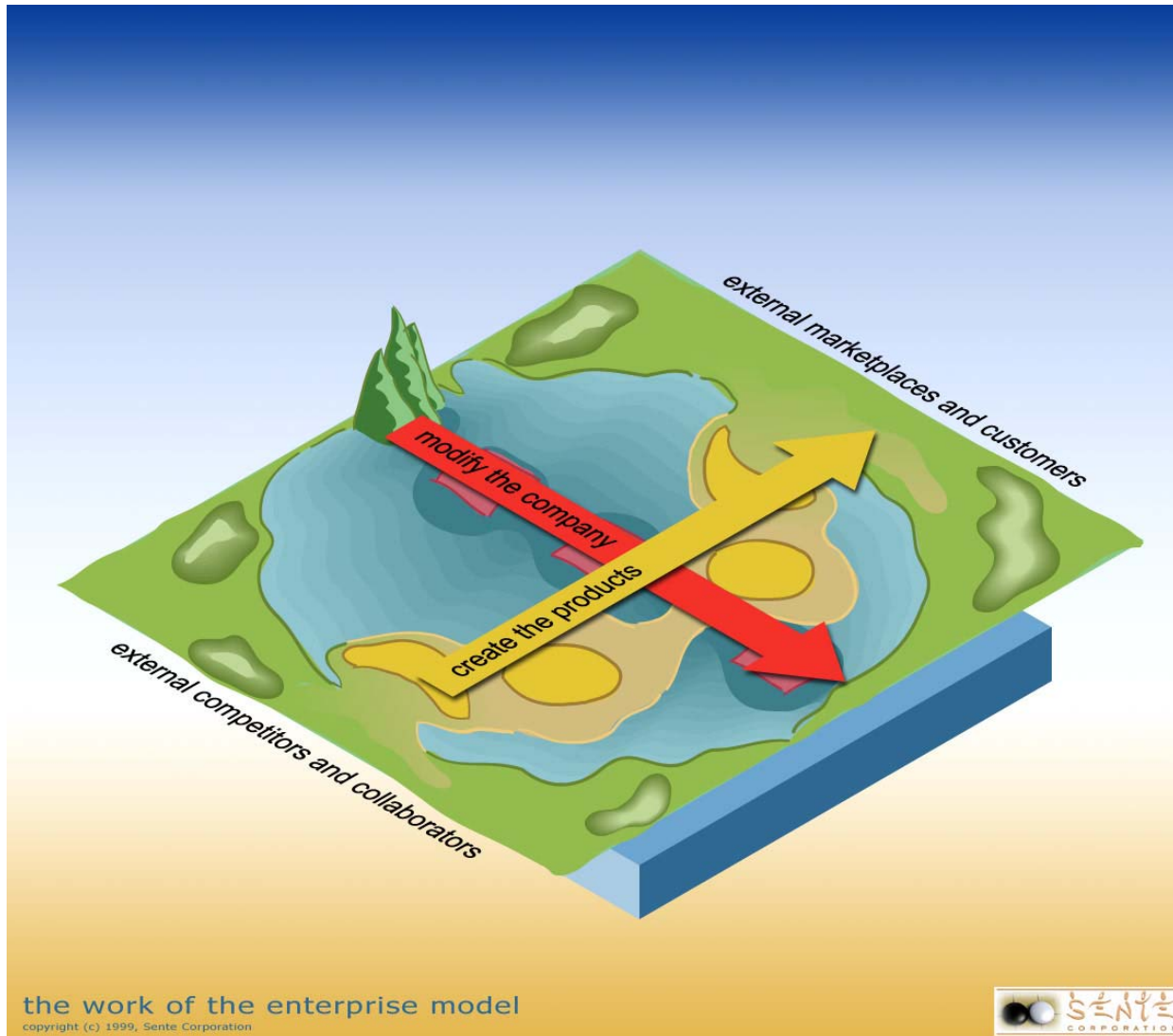
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Building the Story



2



StoryMaps are often created as aids to a verbal story usually delivered in-person. They're prepared on large foam boards or sometimes projected in a PowerPoint presentation, like this one is.

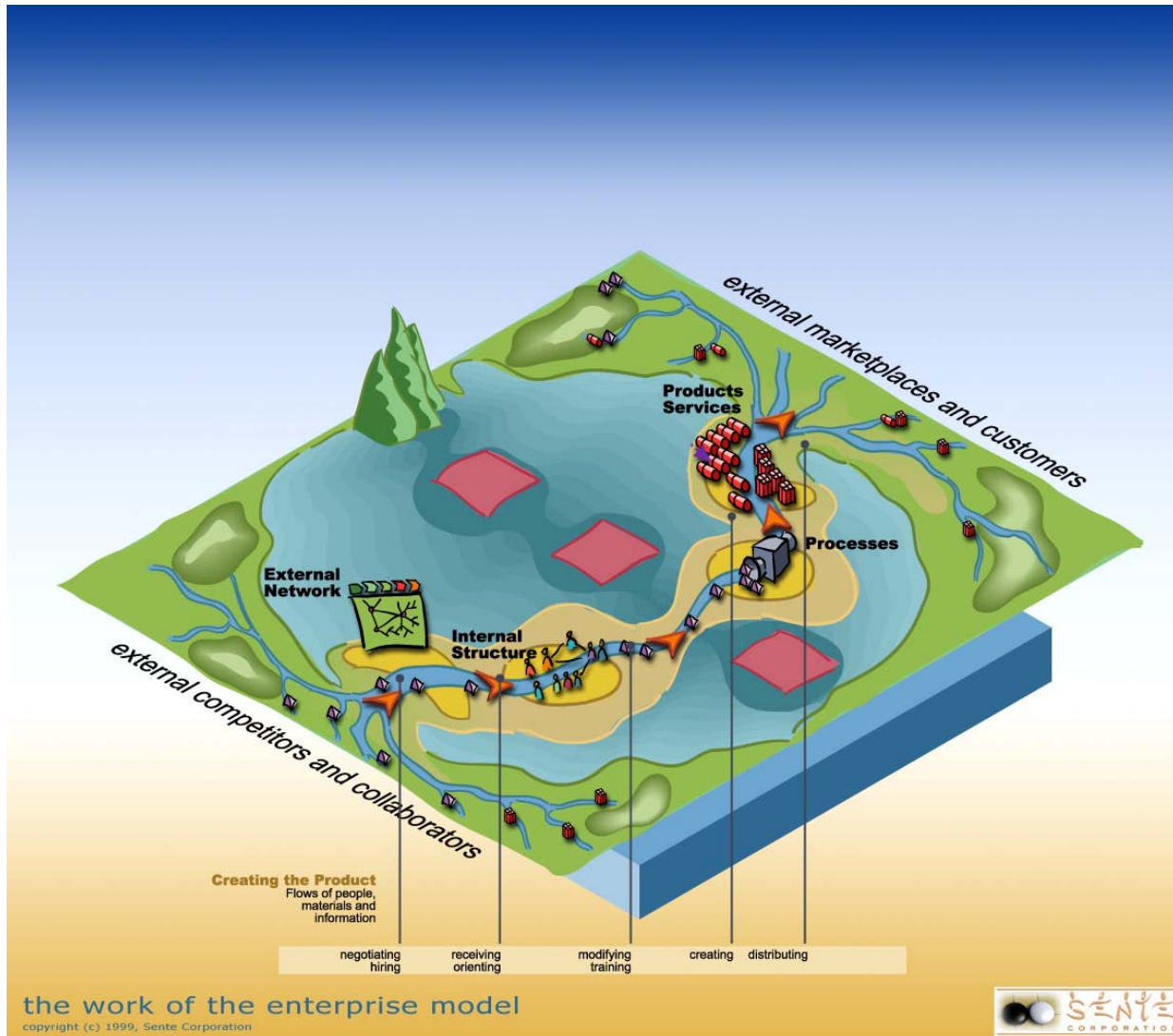
StoryMaps are, well, *maps*. One purpose of all maps is to show a large amount of information about how elements of a complex system relate to one another. A state highway map is an example. Using maps usually requires orientation. Users spend some time looking at them and looking at the relationships between the myriad of features displayed. StoryMaps, therefore, are complex. But that's what also makes them fun. There's a lot going on and a lot to look at and a lot that can be understood.

The map that we'll build in this presentation is a simple example. It is one model of how a company works.

The image on this page shows a company (the blue lake in the middle) surrounded by a green landscape. On the lower left the landscape is occupied by competitors and collaborators (suppliers). On the upper right the landscape is dominated by marketplaces and customers.

The company has two roles according to this map: (1) create the products/services, and (2) modify the company to make it more competitive.

Creating the Products and Services

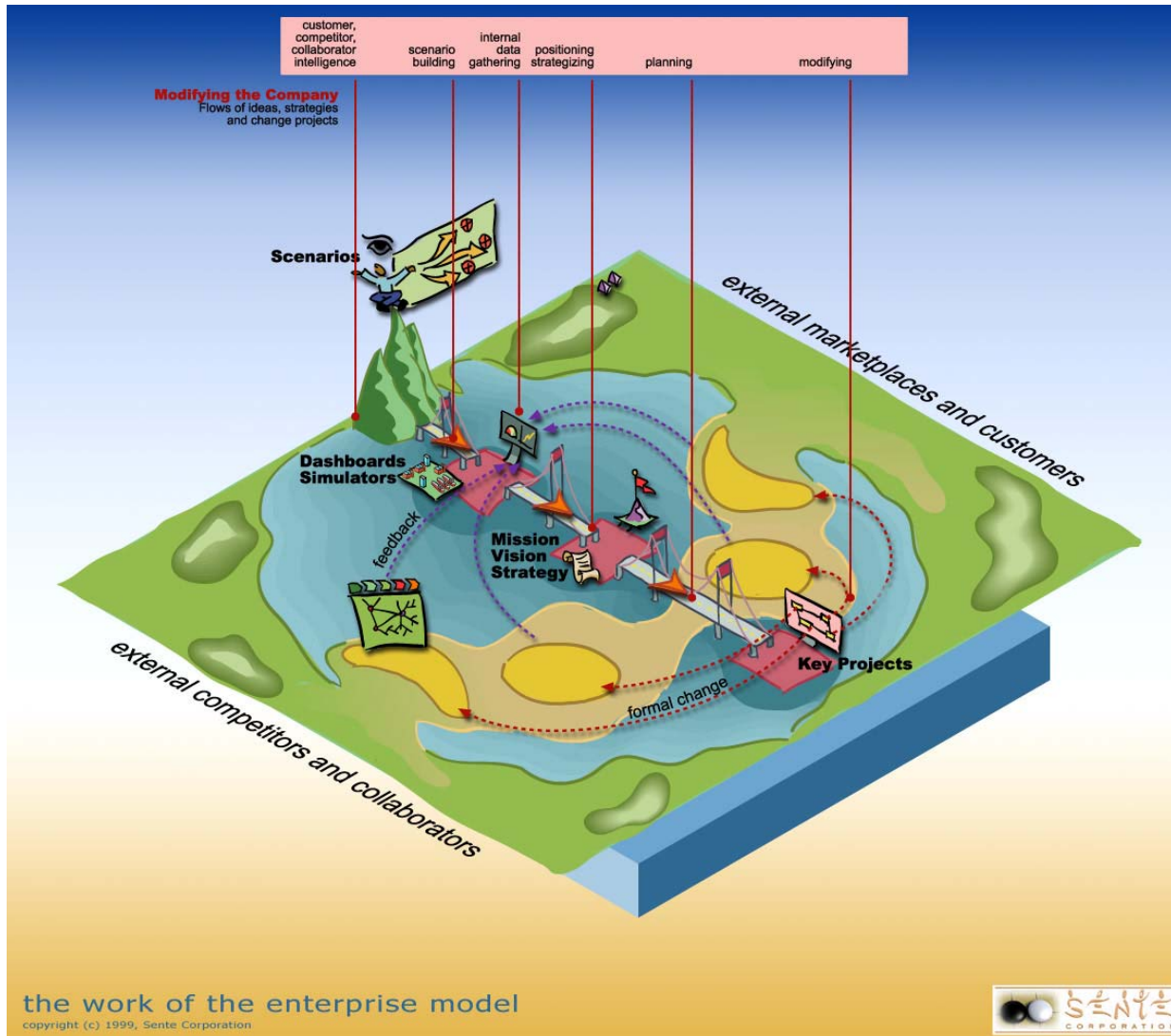


The chain of islands that connects collaborators (suppliers) to customers represents structures and processes (composed of people, materials and information) required to create the products.

The chain starts with negotiating/hiring suppliers and personnel to build a strong value chain (called external network) in this model. Note that the little diagram for the External Network shows five arrows above the diagram and a network diagram inside a rectangle. There are little stories behind these symbols—they're not chosen arbitrarily or placed like clip art. The presenter is at liberty to choose whether to talk about these micro features of the map or not.

The chain continues across with receiving/orienting materials information and people into structures. Structures govern where stuff goes (according to the map). Then follows modifying/training. Next the materials, people and information are employed in processes which lead to the manufacture or creation of products and services which are distributed to the marketplaces and customers.

Modifying the Company

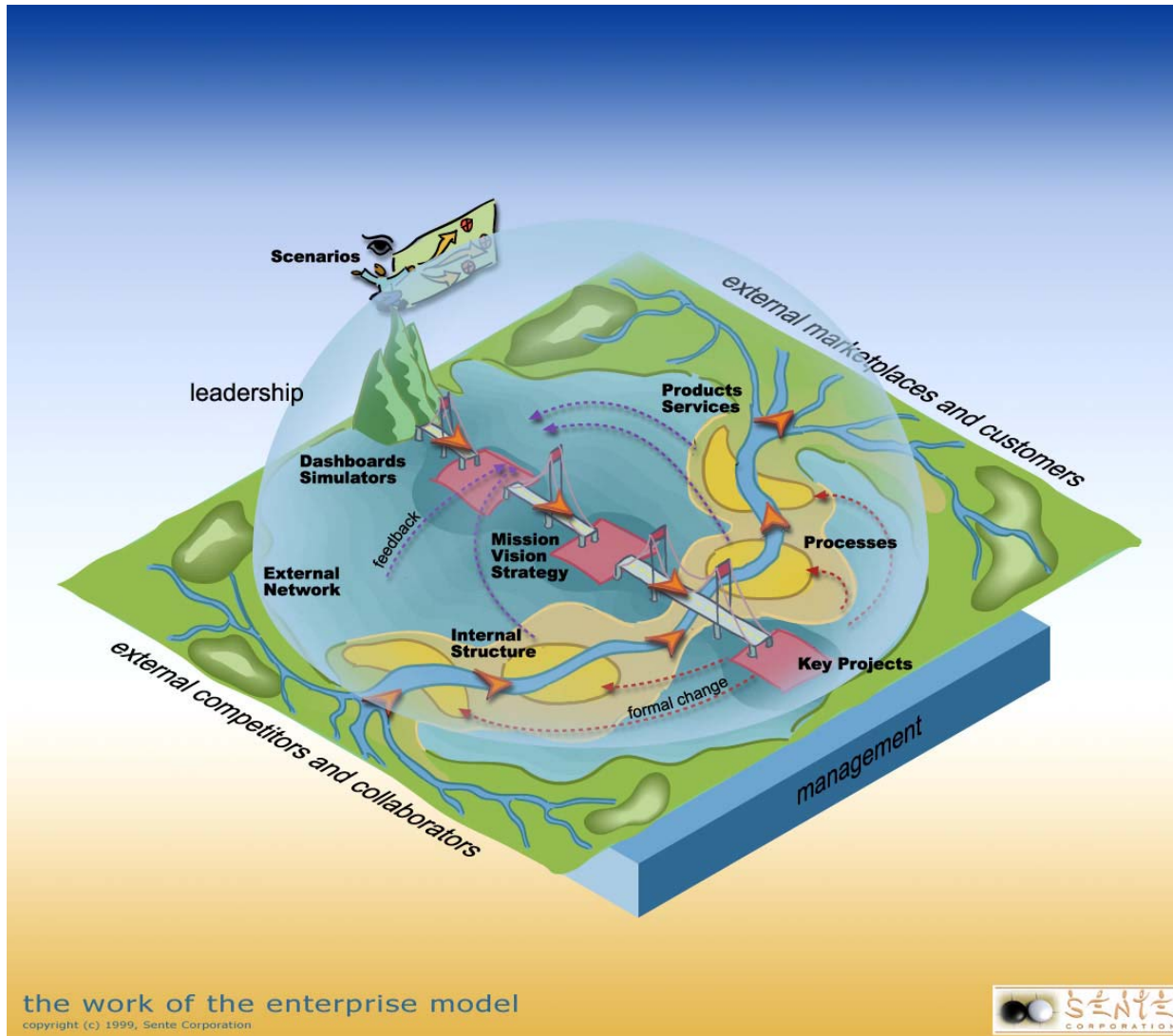


The story continues along the “modifying the company” axis. This axis considers the flow of ideas, strategies and change projects that modify how and what the company creates to deliver to the marketplace and its customers.

Modifying begins with gathering external intelligence, which is molded into external scenarios. These scenarios are then compared with internal intelligence (gained through dashboards and measures). The result of this comparison is strategizing and positioning: the products are mission, vision and strategy.

The position and strategy work highlight changes that have to be made in the company. Turning the strategies into actions requires a planning process out of which key projects are identified, mapped and resourced. This formal change mechanism ends up with modifications being performed on the external structure, internal structure, processes and products/services. As the changes are being implemented, data on the new performance is transmitted back through dashboard mechanisms as feedback to the strategy and planning processes.

Role of Leadership and Management

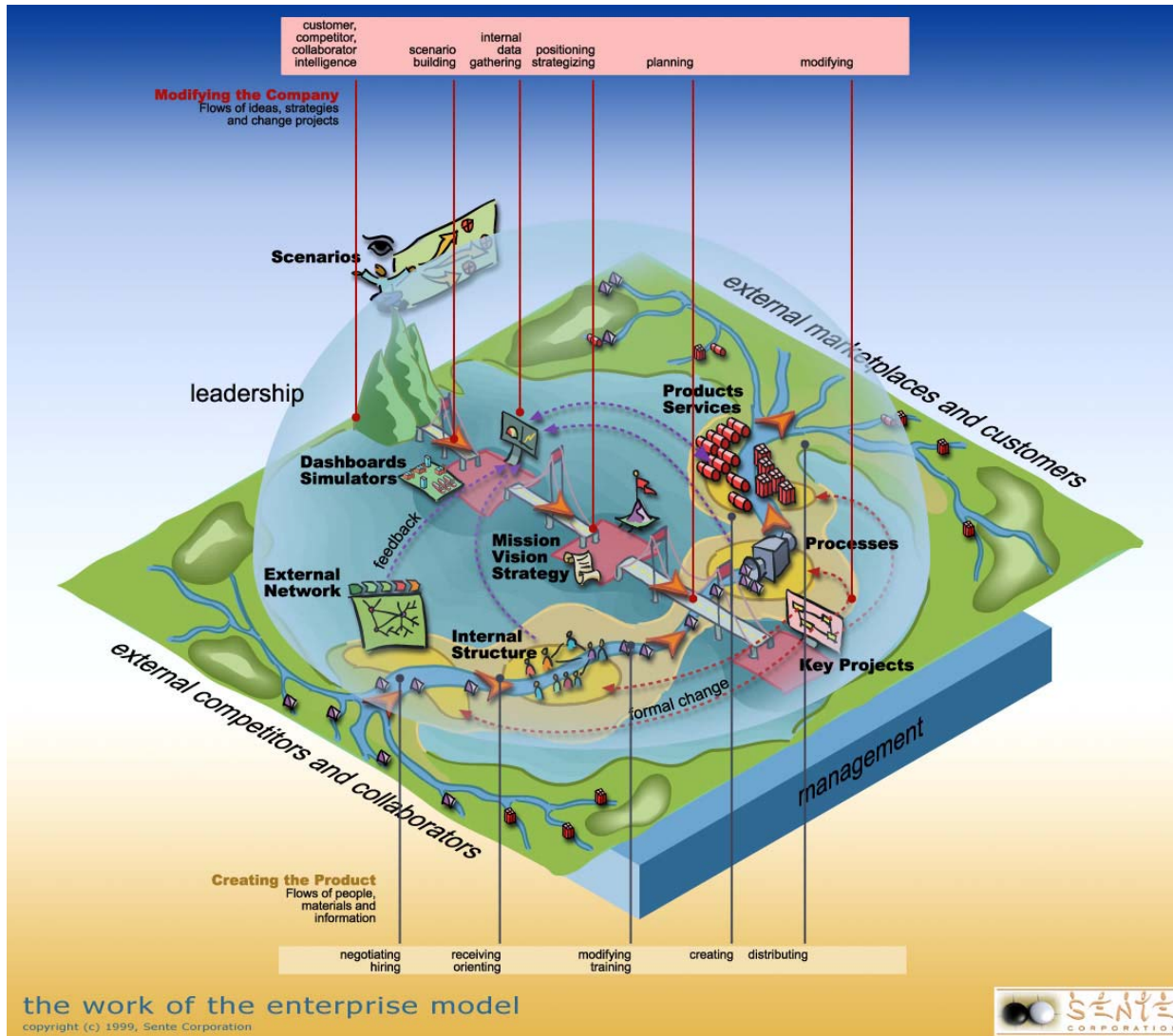


The mysterious blue box under the terrain is labeled as “management” and a dome is applied to the lake, labeled “leadership.” This illustrates the two vantage points of these two different kinds of work and thinking. Management is about the nuts and bolts of creating the product and modifying the company. Leadership is about seeing things from above and having a vantage point from which to inspire and craft whole systems.

The Power of StoryMaps



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Here's the whole model shown at once.

Whether or not you agree with this approach to understanding how a company works, you can get some sense of how a StoryMap might help convey that understanding.

Text is one-dimensional and linear. Words are very powerful and when crafted into stories, they have the ability to create insight and to inspire. Maps are two-dimensional and can be built to represent three dimensions. Maps are non-linear. You can start anywhere you want to on a map and move about it at will, learning as you go.

Together, maps and stories can play a powerful role in learning, sales, strategizing and leading.

Sometimes, three-bullet-per-slide PowerPoint stacks are what's called for. But often, instead of simplifying and increasing comprehension, they are merely mind-numbing.

Maps are a lot more fun and engaging. There's a sense of adventure, exploration and excitement when someone rolls out a map and begins to tell stories of where the treasure is buried or how the battle will be fought, or how the floor plan for the new house will work. People can grab pens and markers and begin to reshape the map to tell their story because maps invite interaction.

A great story and a great map to go with it is a winning combination!